

# Wayland Multidisciplinary Writing Center

## MLA Formatting and Content

### Heading

*At the top of the first page, include the student's name, the professor's name, the course number (and section number if applicable), and the date followed by a centered title on a separate line. All lines are double-spaced, and you do not skip any lines between the heading and the title.*

John Smith	Smith 1
Dr. Brown	
ENGL 1302	
20 May 2016	
Symbolism in William Blake's "London"	

### Introduction

- The introduction should set the context for the rest of the paper. It should tell your readers why you are writing and why your topic is important.
- Typically, a single introductory paragraph should not exceed about two-thirds of a page (around five to eight sentences) even in a long paper. In some circumstances, it may take two paragraphs to fully introduce the paper, but that occurs mostly in upper-level papers.
- The thesis is a clear position that you will support and develop throughout your paper. The sentence will include a brief but complete synopsis of the issues you want to discuss.
- The thesis should be the centermost focus of the paper, and each paragraph you write should answer a question or address an issue you present in your thesis.
- The thesis should be the last sentence of your introduction unless otherwise specified by the professor.

**General Formatting**

One inch margins

12 point font

Highly-legible font

Double-spaced lines

Last name in header

Page number in right corner

## Body

- The length of the paper is always at the professor's discretion.
- You should focus largely on organization and make sure you present your information in the most logical method possible. This will help your readers follow your ideas.
- It is important to include transition sentences at the beginning of each paragraph and wrap-up sentences at the end of each paragraph to smoothly lead into the next topic or subtopic of discussion.
- The topic sentence should come after or be part of the transition sentence in each paragraph. A topic sentence is like a "mini thesis" in that it introduces the main discussion for the paragraph as well as all of its associated elements.
- *ALWAYS STAY ON TOPIC.* Continually refer back to your thesis sentence and topic sentences to insure that you are not straying from the subject.

## Conclusion

- The conclusion should wrap up what you have been discussing in your paper.
- It should follow closely—but not exactly "mirror"—your introduction.
- You should reiterate the points made in your thesis and body of the paper to recap why these topics are important.
- Ideally, a conclusion should also emphasize some useful, interesting, or surprising idea the essay has uncovered.

## Works Cited Page

- The works cited page should appear on a separate page following the end of the paper and/or the footnotes page.
- It is a successive page with a sequential page number.
- The title of the page should be center-aligned and look like this: Works Cited (MLA does not refer to this page as a bibliography).
- The works cited should contain a full list of sources directly referenced in your paper—either quoted or paraphrased.